

MEETING SUMMARY
FOREST MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING (FMAC)
DNR Roscommon Operations Service Center & Field Tour
8717 N. Roscommon Rd., Roscommon
Wednesday, July 11, 2007
9 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

FMAC Members Present

Ms. Lynne Boyd, Chair, Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Dr. Dan Keathley, Michigan State University
Mr. Bill Manson, Michigan Snowmobile Association
Ms. Erin McDonough, Michigan United Conservation Clubs, representing Executive Director
Mr. Warren Suchovsky, Suchovsky Logging
Ms. Anne Woiwode, Sierra Club

FMAC Delegate Present

Mr. Steve Shine, MDA

FMAC Members Absent

Mr. Joel Blohm, Great Northern Lumber of Michigan
Mr. William (Bill) Bobier, Earthscape Resource Management
Mr. William Cook, Michigan State University Extension
Mr. Thomas Dunn, American Motorcycle Association
Mr. Desmond Jones, Michigan Tree Farm System
Dr. Margaret (Peg) Gale, Michigan Technological University
Mr. Frank Ruswick, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
Ms. Susan Holben, MEDC
Mr. Gordon Wenk, MDA

FMAC Committee Advisors Absent

Ms. Leanne Marten, USDA Forest Service

Public Attendees/Guests

Mr. Dave Becker, St. Helen resident
Ms. Sandra Keezek, St. Helen resident
Mr. George Berghorn, Michigan Forest Products Council
Mr. Ron Easterly, Roscommon County resident
Mr. Larry Helvie, Crawford County resident
Mr. Mike Thompson, Roscommon County resident

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Staff Present

Mr. Steve Anderson, DNR
Ms. Kerry Gray, DNR
Ms. Donna LaCourt
Mr. Bill O'Neill, DNR

Welcome

Chair Lynne Boyd welcomed FMAC members and guests and called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. **Chair Boyd** provided background of the FMAC for the public present.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chair Boyd provided an overview of the agenda.

MOTION: **Ms. Anne Woiwode** moved to adopt the agenda;
 Supported by **Mr. Warren Suchovsky**
 Motion passed.

ADOPTION OF MEETING SUMMARY/June 11, 2007

Chair Boyd called for adoption of the June 11, 2007 Meeting Summary.

Mr. Suchovsky noted a typo on page 4 that needed to be corrected.

Mr. Berghorn requested changes in the meeting summary to two statements to better reflect his comments.

- P.5 change sentence that begins "Mr. Berghorn commented if FMAC chooses..." change "most interest" to "some interests."
- P. 6, strike the sentence "Mr. Berghorn commented he is an advocate of the FMAC making comments on the manual."

MOTION: **Anne Woiwode** moved to adopt the June 11, 2007 Meeting Summary, as amended;
 Supported by **Mr. Bill Manson**
 Motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Anne Woiwode received an email from the Grayling Visitor's Bureau addressed to the FMAC. **Chair Boyd** read the email aloud to the Committee and said she will provide a copy to the FMAC members.

Mr. Ron Easterly, Mr. Larry Helvie and Mr. Mike Thompson voiced concern over the clearcutting the DNR is doing in Roscommon and Crawford counties, and the impact this is having on their property both aesthetically and economically, and their ability to recreate on the State Forest land as they have done in the past. **Mr. Easterly and Mr. Thompson** provided pictures of some of the areas the DNR had clearcut along Campground Road in Roscommon County. **Mr. Thompson** stated he understood that certain areas of State Forest land need to be clearcut, but thought it could be done in areas where it did not impact homes. **Mr. Easterly** stated that debris is being left and not chipped, and it is difficult to walk through and snowmobile on the trails in the areas that have been clearcut. **Mr. Helvie** also commented that some of the trails have been blocked with piles of sand.

Mr. Steve Anderson, DNR- FMFM Roscommon Unit Manager, stated the areas that **Mr. Easterly, Mr. Helvie and Mr. Thompson** are referring to are areas of mixed oak, primarily black oak and pin oak which are short-lived and on poor sites, and also aspen and white oak. The areas need to be clearcut to ensure adequate regeneration of the sites.

Ms. Woiwode asked the size of the clearcut area. **Mr. Bill O'Neill**, DNR-FMFM Lower Peninsula Field Coordinator stated that it was 231 acres. **Ms. Woiwode** asked how the public was notified of the compartment review where this clearcut area was discussed. **Mr. Anderson** said it was published in the newspaper and that **Mr. Easterly** attended the compartment review.

Ms. Woiwode asked what alternate strategies were considered for this area. **Mr. Anderson** answered that thinning was considered, but that he had to weigh the percentage of red oak and its quality. The red oak in the stand was becoming overmature and growing on poor quality soils. It needed to be cut in order to foster adequate regeneration. If he waited until the trees died they would not get red oak regeneration from stump sprouts because the root stock would be dead. In the clearcut sites he left white oak and islands of pine. **Mr. Anderson** stated he is trying to get age distribution in the stands, and these clearcuts are in multiple compartments and in multiple stands; they are not all done at the same time.

Ms. Woiwode stated that the compartment are treated as individual areas and may not be considered a part of the whole landscape.

Ms. Woiwode asked about the condition and the blocking of the trails that Mr. Easterly, Mr. Helvie and Mr. Thompson mentioned. **Mr. Anderson** stated the trails were not snowmobile trails; they were two-tracks or old logging roads. They are not designated snowmobile trails. He described the policy on logging roads; if the road is put in for a timber sale the road is closed after the sale is complete. If there are multiple, superfluous trails, they will be closed but these closures are discussed at the compartment review. **Mr. O'Neill** stated the DNR does have a road closure policy and procedure that does apply to forest roads.

Mr. Dave Becker stated that he receives a grant to maintain the Section 6 snowmobile trail, and that this past winter (mid-February to the end of the snowmobile season) they were unable to get a groomer through the trail from M-55 to F-97 because of the snow drifts. He asked the DNR to put a snow fence up in this area, and he was denied permission. **Mr. Becker** stated they need help in clearcut areas if they are expected to groom and maintain trails.

Mr. Anderson stated he denied Mr. Becker's request to use snow fence because he did not feel it was appropriate for long-term use, and the issue was that once they put in the snow fence they would have to come back in a few months and remove it.

Mr. Suchovsky asked about how well aspen was regenerating in the area. **Mr. Anderson** replied they had good aspen regeneration. **Mr. Suchovsky** asked if there was any oak wilt in the area. **Mr. Anderson** answered that there are some sites in Higgins Lake and St. Helen, but none on state land yet. **Ms. Donna LaCourt** asked if there was oak decline on the poor sites in the area. **Mr. Anderson** answered yes. **Mr. Easterly** stated that he thought the soil was fine to grow oak.

Ms. Erin McDonough stated that Michigan United Conservation Club constituents in the Upper Peninsula were concerned about leaving no slash on the land. What will removing all of the slash do to regeneration and wildlife habitat? **Mr. O'Neill** replied that it depends on the wildlife you are trying to attract and the species you are trying to regenerate.

Ms. Keezek asked why a buffer of trees cannot be left along homes, roads, and for wildlife.

Ms. LaCourt answered that the DNR is learning from experience and that it does have an opportunity to manage the visual impacts associated with timber management. She stated in some instances a buffer is not appropriate because it makes the remaining trees susceptible to windfall and can become hazardous. **Mr. O'Neill** said that using buffers depends on the goal and objectives of the harvest, and they have been utilized in the Roscommon area. In terms of wildlife, he stated that different animals need different age forest; depending on the wildlife you are interested in attracting will depend on whether buffer would be necessary.

Ms. Woiwode asked what the goals were for the compartments that Mr. Easterly and Mr. Thompson has concerns about. **Mr. Anderson** stated the goal of the 230 acre clearcut was to have acceptable regeneration of primarily oak, but also aspen and maple. The area had significant mortality, and they looked at the size and condition of the oak; they were 14-16" DBH. Oak any larger than that would not result in good stump sprout regeneration.

Ms. Woiwode commented that acceptable regeneration of mixed species did not sound like a management goal but more of a technique. She stated it would be hard to comment during the compartment review when it was not clear what the goals are on the land. She thought that this might be changing with DNR's dual certification.

Mr. Helvie stated the maximum size the DNR could clearcut was 140 acres. **Mr. Anderson** stated the DNR did not have a maximum size for a timber harvest.

Mr. Helvie stated that when you chip-up all of the slash after a timber harvest, you remove all of the nutrients from the soil and you will not be able to grow anything on the site. **Dr. Dan Keathley** disagreed with Mr. Helvie and stated there have been numerous studies on soils and the impact of harvests, and there is no evidence there is a loss of productivity of the land due to harvesting over multiple generations.

Mr. Helvie commented that 100 years ago there were no oak stands in Crawford County and now it makes up 20% of species. The DNR is not letting Mother Nature take its course. **Chair Boyd** stated there are many management objectives on State Lands and the DNR needs to balance all of these. The State Forest lands are at a cusp where a lot of forests are 100 years old, and the DNR is trying to make it an uneven aged system.

Mr. Suchovsky thanked the public for attending the meeting and providing their comments. He stated the FMAC developed Generally Accepted Forest Management Practices (GAFMPs) for the Right to Forest Act that was adopted by the DNR Natural Resources Commission last November. The scenic and visual management were an important element and were included in the GAFMPs; as time goes on, loggers will look at utilizing these tools for visual management.

Chair Boyd thanked the public for their participation in the meeting. She asked Mr. O'Neill to provide background of the Roscommon management unit, and discuss the agenda for the tour the FMAC members would be taking following the meeting.

Mr. O'Neill described the Roscommon Management Unit. Roscommon is one of 15 management units in the State. It contains 275,000 acres of State Forest land and is a very busy unit. Issues that impact the unit include recreation (snowmobiles, ORV, campground, pathways), fire (it has among the highest fire-prone species in the state), and the urban-rural interface. The area is a glacial outwash sandy plain which is not conducive to long lived forests; 85% of the upland forests are oak, aspen, and jack pine. Of the oak species, 85% are short-lived black oak and pin oak. The forests are from 0 to 100 years old. Pre-settlement vegetation was oak, red pine, jack pine and aspen, dependent on site. One-third of the unit is wetland spruce, fir and cedar; not much management is done in these areas. The management goals in this unit depend on the site but can include age class distribution, mixed species regeneration, and movement of species.

Mr. O'Neill reviewed the agenda for the tour.

- Campground Road (oak decline, aesthetics, clearcut and age class distribution)
- AJD Timber Sale (oak-aspen regeneration, retention and visual impacts)

- Muma sale (harvest along highway, retention)
- Central Drive Final Harvest Site
- Kirtland Warbler Site (meet with DNR wildlife biologist)
- Beaver Lake Town Site (Kirtland Warbler management, ORV damage)

Business meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

FMAC members toured Roscommon Management Unit 10:45-4:00 pm.

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, August 1, 2007

MUCC

2101 Wood St., Lansing

1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.